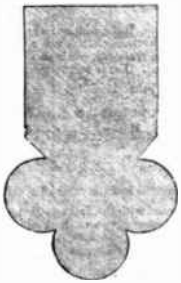
FONT IN ST. MARY'S CHURCH, BRECON.

ELEVATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE BUILDER."

SIR,—The obliging readiness with which you have inserted many little previous contributions from me to your useful magazine, has induced me to send you sketches of a font in St. Mary's Church, Brecon. It is, doubtless, an early production, as the style of the work seems somewhat of the "Decorated period;" though I must confess myself not antiquary enough to determine precisely the date of its execution. It is elaborately ornamented, and its carving is very boldly and accurately chiselled; the effect of its design is certainly very pleasing, and well worthy of being re-produced in modern works intended for the same purpose. Indeed, if many of our little obscure country churches were resorted to, and their beautiful architectural details properly surveyed, often would as much instruction be afforded to the man of letters, to the student, and to the professor, as results from even the contemplation of the prouder conceptions of the genius of our ancestors. Perhaps, in some humble village church, unknown and unnoticed, some pure remain of Saxon or of British architecture may be concealed, by its obscurity secured from even the intrusion of the longing antiquary. In Wales there are many sequestered spots, which are little else than dilapidated ruins, and though possessing few architectural minutiæ worthy of notice, are still not devoid of interest, when connected with their associations of the past; and were there to arise, in some of the mountain fastnesses of the principality, another Walter Scott—that far-famed magician of the North—and to breathe the life of his genius through the ivy-clad sanctuaries of our forefathers, and the thousand legends with which they are associated, in conjunction with



PLAN OF THE SHAFT.

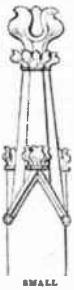
some stirring passages of history, to-day as freshly primitive, as in the days of

"High-born Hoel's harp,
And soft Llewellyn's lay;"

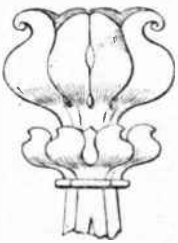
those deserted walls would be invested with a new and indefinable interest; and these humble relics of devotion, containing the ashes of many an illustrious personage, seated as they are amidst the sublimest display of nature, would become as deservedly celebrated, and be sought for by as many pilgrims, as Ben-Lomond.

MOULDINGS AT A. (*Half the size of the original.*)

The shaft of the font, from the lower necking-mould shewn at B to the square plinth, is formed of wood; therefore an after-production, probably according to the taste of some country renovator. It appears to me very probable, that the font was originally fixed in the wall, as there are some fragments of a moulding in the back-ground, carved out of the same stone, which seem to have been flush with the face of a wall, forming a sort of label, butting up against the font, leaving exposed three whole sides and two half sides of the octagonal basin. The bowl, within which a metal basin is inserted with a rim, is sunk to the depth of eight inches. I cannot discover any water-drain, therefore I should suppose it always contained a moveable basin of some kind or other. The church in which it is placed is little better than a barn, with the exception of a very fine old tower, a sketch of which I propose to send you at my first leisure. It is above a hundred feet high, and is supported at three of its angles by buttresses, and at the fourth is an octagonal turret. It is coped by very fine moulded battlements. The inhabitants desire to build a new church in the same style as the tower when they have sufficient funds; but I am fearful it will be a long time in hand, although designs have been furnished, and I think were some years ago partly approved of. There is some very good



SMALL PINNACLES. (*Half the size of the original.*



FINIALS ABOVE THE ARCHES. (*Half the size of the original.*)

MOULDINGS AT B. (*One-fourth the size of the original.*)

Gothic wood-carving also in the church, especially the sounding-board of the pulpit, which is rather a singular piece of workmanship.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,
J. L. T.

[We should most particularly like to publish all procurable examples of carving, more especially cusps, spandrils, bosses, corbelliee, crockets, finials, capitals, panels, battlements, cornices, string-moulds, canopy-work, and coat-armoury. Our modern Gothic structures are deficient from the want of correct and tasteful carving more than from any other cause.—ED.]

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